

Share your experiences

JOHN
MUIR
AWARD
21
1997 - 2018

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018

JOHN
MUIR
AWARD

21
1997 - 2018



1997 Dunbar pupils
join 21st Birthday
celebrations



The John Muir Award
turns 21 *pages 2-7*

The Lost Words *page 10*

Young People & Nature *page 11*

The John Muir Award is the main engagement initiative of the John Muir Trust.
It encourages people to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places.

www.johnmuiraward.org
#johnmuiraward

JOHN
MUIR
TRUST

The John Muir Trust formally launched the John Muir Award, its main engagement initiative, on 26th February 1997.

Back in 1997 what was going on? Titanic and the Full Monty graced the big screen, Harry Potter's adventures began, and The Spice Girls dominated the hit parade.

And the John Muir Trust? Well, it had 3 staff, 4 properties, and was directed from a dining room table in Dundee. 634 John Muir Award certificates were presented. The John Muir Trust's Journal & News of January 1997 refers to "the John Muir Award initiative", telling members that it's "now coming to fruition and will become an important aspect of the Trust's work".

Referring to strategies for protecting wild places, the article says "[Victorian wilderness pioneer John Muir] soon realised that mass-education and awareness raising was the only way in which Conservation could be kept high on the national agenda. Muir used the Sierra Club plus his own writings and lectures to educate the public and gain support for conservation. In a similar vein The John Muir Trust has created the John Muir Award as a vehicle for involving many more people in our work."

Many strong threads weave through the past 21 years:

Concept

We haven't messed about with it. At its heart, it's still about individuals. Discovering wild places, actively Exploring them, helping Conserve them, and Sharing experiences.

Subjective

Our approach starts with where people are at rather than saying 'come to us' or 'let us lead activities for you'. It promotes personal (and shared) experiences and values the achievements of individuals on their own terms.

Collaborative

The framework and associated resources have always been 'open source'. Partnerships are set up to be win:win. Delivery of the John Muir Award is seen as a shared ownership.

Cross-sector

We don't put nature in a bubble, or treat 'the environment' as an entirely separate sector. We generally view nature more through a societal than a scientific lens - embracing education, inclusion, health & wellbeing, personal development, arts & creativity perspectives.

Reference points

'Heart, Head, Hand' thinking (promoted by Patrick Geddes) underpins our approach, as does the quote "You change people by delight, by pleasure" from 13th century theologian St Thomas Aquinas. We embrace recent Princeton University research findings: 'Rethink environmental messaging to harness the power of positive emotions such as pride.'

Influence

We aim to have useful influence - whether working to support policy initiatives, in partnerships, or highlighting brilliant work on the ground to recognise good practice. This is more important to us than chasing numerical take-up.

Fast forward to 2018. Overall Trust staff numbers are around 50, our main office base in Pitlochry is a Wild Space multi-media hub, we own 9 land estates and our first management undertaking in England is under way at Glenridding Common. The John Muir Award team has 13 staff in 9 different locations; around 36,500 people got involved last year, with over 1500 Provider organisations enabling this delivery.

Twenty one years on, over 333,000 people of all ages and backgrounds have achieved a John Muir Award. To all who have participated, delivered, supported, shared, conserved, led, followed, funded - this is your celebration as much as ours. Happy Birthday!

Read on for 21 year milestones, a 21st Birthday event at Dunbar, and testimonials from around the UK. See more at www.JohnMuirTrust.org/Award21 Search 'John Muir Award Award21'



Milestones



Dunbar hosts birthday celebrations

Over 100 people from across the United Kingdom gathered in Dunbar to celebrate the 21st birthday of the John Muir Award on 26th February, marking the anniversary of the formal launch of the Trust's main engagement initiative.



With beach activities and litter picks, tours of John Muir's birthplace, exhibitions and archive displays, the event captured many elements of the evolution of the John Muir Award from a small project to a core part of the Trust's work, from its youthful years to a coming of age. Having been the venue for the official ceremony in 1997, Dunbar Leisure Centre again hosted the celebration. And with many

guests – including former staff and Trustees, early Award recipients, funders and supporters - having attended the launch 21 years ago, the sports hall resonated to the sounds of reminiscences and reflections.

Local schoolchildren from The Compass Primary School braved the arctic chill and explored the beach that John Muir played on



as a boy, 170 years ago, finding perhaps more plastic nurdles and jetsam than Muir might have encountered.

Lord Lindsay, via video-link, commented: "Of the many events I attended as the then Scottish Office Environment Minister, the trip to Dunbar in 1997 [to launch the Award] remains a vivid memory. I ended up exploring rockpools and the seashore with a bucket and a bunch of happy schoolkids. They were thrilled not to be in class, I was thrilled not to be in the office. 21 years later, many congratulations to the John Muir Trust. Many more people, of all ages, are now involved in conservation than was the case. Congratulations to all who have made it such an enduring success.

Four of those Dunbar Primary School 'happy schoolkids' referenced by Lord Lindsay – Victoria, Sharon, Lisa and Nadia - heard about the event, and came along with original 'Beyond the pail' and 'On the rocks' news clippings.



Local MSP Iain Gray lent his support, along with John Muir's Birthplace Trustees. David Picken carried out the feasibility study and piloted the John Muir Award whilst working for the Trust from 1995. "I'm proud to see such growth from its humble origins, offering support to ever more people to get out and enjoy wild places. I'm sure the John Muir Trust will continue to see its value as a means of keeping Muir's messages alive and relevant."



Nigel Hawkins, founding Trust member and Director at the time of launch reflected "The John Muir Award certainly has stood the test of time and I am sure that it will well into the future...It has been truly part of the beating heart of The John Muir Trust. It has played a crucial role in taking John Muir's message out to people of all ages and backgrounds in a way which John Muir himself could hardly have imagined. We re-tread his footsteps in his home town of Dunbar with humility but at the same time we can be sure he would be proud of what you and everyone involved in the Award has achieved in his name. Changing lives for the better and encouraging love for our natural world are mighty ideals of the highest human aspiration. And that is exactly what the John Muir Award has achieved."

For more images of our 1997 and 2018 events, see a 2 minute film at www.johnmuirtrust.org/Award21



We have a growing catalogue of diverse personal reflections from John Muir Award Providers and supporters spanning over two decades.



I have always been inspired by John Muir, and living in a National Park and on the side of Blencathra 'The mountains are calling and I must go' is also a personal mantra. As such it has been a real privilege for the last fifteen years to work closely with the John Muir Trust to deliver outdoor learning experiences for such a wide range of students.

Tim Foster, Head of Centre, FSC Blencathra

What attracted me to the John Muir Award is that it is open to all different backgrounds, groups, families and individuals. Working on my own Awards has brought about a change from me just being an outdoor person to a more nature conservation approach.

Gary Yemm, school janitor, East Ayrshire

Since I was 14 my two heroes have been Strathclyde Country Park Countryside Ranger Bob Reid and John Muir. Bob always encouraged me to experience new places and do new things...[this] has definitely stayed with me. Looking back, it was the encouragement from Bob, the experiences I had in wild places, and the people I met whilst doing my John Muir Award that have helped make me the person I am today.



Bob Reid and Dave Picken

Joanne Cowie, 3,000th John Muir Award recipient, 1999



...undertaking our John Muir Award together has been transformational. It has not just connected us to each other, as a team, but reconnected each of us to our very special place, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. Appreciating the beauty, healing and inspiration of our natural environment is something that we will all use in every part of our lives.

Charlotte Wallace, Volunteering, Engagement and Programme Manager, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park



"Pen blwydd hapus i Wobr John Muir"! (Birthday greetings to the John Muir Award)

It was a pleasure to recruit and collaborate with Hugo Iffla as Wales Award Manager and first John Muir Trust staff member south of the border in 2002. There have been many milestones since, both numerical and political, but in cultural terms the development of Welsh language Award material was notable. Nowadays I welcome John Muir Award groups to a small but precious fragment of woodland I'm fortunate enough to own and manage near Betws y Coed.

Del (& Sally) Davies

The John Muir Award, for many participants in our Branching Out programme, is the first certification they receive in their life, and it means a lot for them to have achieved this. I have chosen a picture of the first refugee and asylum seeker group I worked with. It was an incredible joy to work with people who were deeply engaged with the process and eager to learn.

Nathalie Moriarty, Branching Out Manager, Forestry Commission Scotland



Over my time working with the Phoenix Futures 'Recovery Through Nature' programme I have witnessed hundreds of people who had reached a troubled point within themselves, felt isolated and sometimes even ostracised from society going to the polar opposite by seeking support and then engaging in the John Muir Award! People who felt trapped in a negative cycle of destructive behaviours and at times felt too anxious to venture outdoors by themselves were able to feel that real connection that nature provides, and through discovery, exploration, conservation and sharing personal experiences with others they created a sense of wellbeing, enjoying their life again. People experienced personal and external discovery, wanting to find out more about nature and the world we live in, not only now wanting to preserve their own life and become healthier in all aspects, but to also care and be proactive in protecting our world.

Adrian Moran, Phoenix Futures



He loved participating in the John Muir Award and each night of the week-long course would come home and excitedly tell me all he had got up to and was very keen to go back the next day. He had a really great sense of achievement and this has had a positive effect on his self-esteem.

Parent of 14 year old boy on his Explorer Award, Clackmannanshire Council Youth Services

I was behind a proposal to use the John Muir Award as our main approach to young people/outdoor education in the Cairngorms National Park – it was one of first decisions Cairngorms National Park Authority Board ever made back in 2003. So yes, I'm a BIG supporter of the John Muir Award – it is simply brilliant because:

- it focusses on what is important in getting people outdoors – in wild places – and thinking
- it is low bureaucracy in a world where paperwork and emails are making us mad
- it 'just works' with partners so it is easy for others to use, so spreading 'the word'
- management of the scheme has ALWAYS been innovative and energising
- it is a great people-centred counterbalance to the interminable wild-land debates
- and it starts with where people are, not where the wild(est) land is or might be

Murray Ferguson, Director of Planning and Rural Development, Cairngorms National Park



Let us know if you'd like to share your story. See full versions at www.johnmuirtrust.org/Award21, and #JohnMuirAward21

“Positive and creative technology” – A snapshot of the Record eBook

Since its launch 6 months ago over 50 groups have registered for their free Record eBook account, including families, schools, outdoor centres, adult and youth groups. Over 400 digital posts showcase an amazing diversity of experiences – from camera trap pictures of badgers, to acrostic tree poems, from high wire adventure films to family seaside paddles.

Browse the Record eBook to see what others have been doing as part of their John Muir Award. You can search experiences by media type (film, text, images, sound), location, date, or by a specific John Muir Award group. Ask your John Muir Award key contact about registering your own free Record eBook account and get involved.



“I really do think this is a brilliant way of encouraging exploring and conserving in the modern age. With a smartphone in hand, young people can use it in a positive, creative way to record and share their experiences. Technology isn't automatically bad, it's how we use it. I think the John Muir Award Record eBook is a great way to make sure this is a positive relationship that works for us and helps us engage more with nature.”

Edward Lawrence, BOLD Adventures

The John Muir Award Record eBook was created with help from Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Information Film was funded by The Gannochy Trust.

A new 2-minute film provides a guide to the benefits of using the Record eBook and how to use it.

www.johnmuiraward.org/recordbook

Search 'John Muir Award Record eBook'

A Values Perspective on the John Muir Award

The John Muir Trust believes that wild places are essential for the wellbeing of people and wildlife. Inspired by the ethos of John Muir, we want to encourage active care for nature in a way that promotes values associated with wildness and the natural environment.

In a recent publication, we've summarised why values matter within the conservation sector and to us as an organisation. Bringing 'caring' values to the fore through communications can help people to connect with and prioritise values such as feeling part of nature, recognising the beauty

of the natural world and protecting the environment.

Drawing on examples of how we talk about people's experiences of achieving and delivering the John Muir Award, we highlight how sharing stories about engaging with wild places in meaningful, creative and fun ways can help to reinforce pro-environmental values.

Read [here](#) about the types of values frequently promoted through John Muir Award communications, as well as links to further information and toolkits that can help you to explore values through your own work.

Search 'John Muir Award values perspective'



Credit: Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

Lake District renews partnership & celebrates World Heritage status

The John Muir Trust's partnership with the Lake District National Park is to be extended to March 2020, into its 10th year. It's a relationship which enables 3000 people each year to benefit from using the John Muir Award, encouraging them to enjoy, understand and care for wild places across the Lake District and Cumbria.

This follows two significant events in 2017: the designation of the Lake District as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the lease of Glenridding Common to the John Muir Trust for 3 years, where we will take on the management of this spectacular landscape with its common and mountains.

These are closely linked: Glenridding Common is a fine example of the 'Outstanding Universal Value' of the World Heritage Site, demonstrating three core elements of Identity, Inspiration and Conservation. We've written a summary of how the John Muir Trust contributes to these World Heritage themes.

Central to its Identity is the physical and social presence of upland hill farming with its stone walls and 'hefted' sheep grazing the fell. Inspiration from the landscape has a historical aspect and is very much present for the adventurers, visitors and artists of today. And Conservation of this special place - in the face of contemporary issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pressure on traditional farming systems and visitor impact - requires collaboration between farming, tourism and conservation organisations.



Photo: Rob Clarke



The John Muir Award has been recognised as a significant part of this mix, and more widely through involvement in a new project which aims to bring the value of Commons to wider public attention across England. *Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons* will focus on Dartmoor and Yorkshire Dales National Parks and Shropshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as well as the Lake District.

Search 'John Muir Trust World Heritage', 'John Muir Trust Glenridding Common'

Framing Nature Toolkit

New from the Public Interest Research Centre – the folk at the heart of Common Cause values and framing work – is “a guide to how words can help wildlife”. It builds on the work of *Common Cause for Nature* to look at the practical application of communication tools in conservation.



The guide shows – through activities, tools and advice – that our choice of words is just as important as any other decision we make in conservation. It explains how we can frame our communications in ways that are more likely to convince, motivate and inspire others to help our cause.

The toolkit helps:

- **Spot the jargon:** Technical language and abbreviations can trap us in particular ways of thinking and distance us from non-expert groups.
- **Define problems differently:** The words you choose to use to describe the problems and issues you face at work will impact on the solutions you come up with.
- **See framing everywhere!** Even your surroundings – your office layout, the signs in a nature reserve, and the location and surroundings of your meetings – are framing understanding and responses to nature. Are the frames you're using helping or hindering?

Find out more about the Framing Nature project and download the toolkit here. www.publicinterest.org.uk/nature-toolkit/



@CartoonRalph

Since its publication last year, *The Lost Words*, a new book by writer Robert Macfarlane and artist Jackie Morris, has not only become a publishing phenomenon, but also captured the public's imagination in a way rarely seen before.

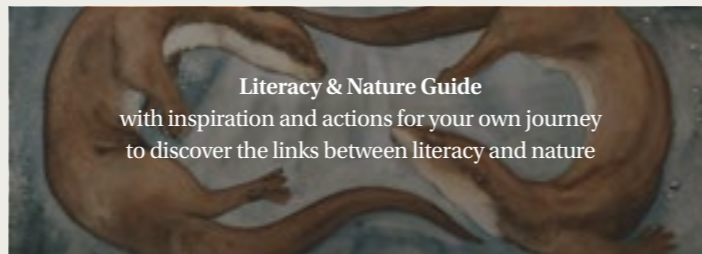
"The Lost Words is not only a book. The work is a praise-song, in word and in image, to the natural world. Both Robert and myself have a deep love for the non-human world. The Lost Words is about language, the naming of things, the wild words. Our book, and the exhibition and Explorer's Guide, are aimed at a re-focusing, a movement towards rewilding, not just children, but adults also.

Robert has written spells, words that almost demand to be read out loud, shared, and in the ways of magic and by 'sleight-of-word' rather than 'sleight-of-hand', we are trying to divert the eye away from the human, the urban, and into the nearby wild. For we live surrounded by the wild, even in cities. To name our creatures, trees, birds, to know our stories, is to understand our place in the wild wide world."
Jackie Morris

Articles including *Lost & Found* interview from the John Muir Trust Spring 2018 Journal



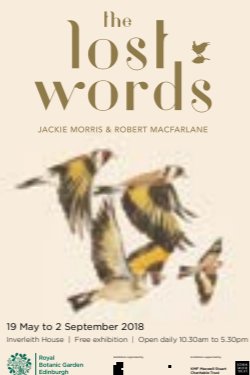
In action
A wealth of examples can be found on a sharing padlet and at #TheLostWords



Information, resources and activities supported by the John Muir Trust, available at www.johnmuirtrust.org/thelostwords, include:

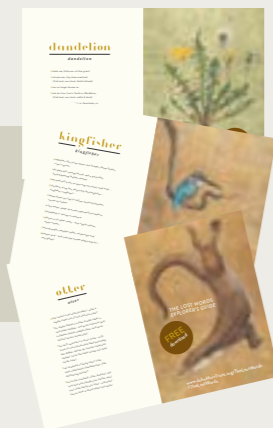


An Explorer's Guide to *The Lost Words* by Eva John. Free to download, it's especially useful for teachers and educators.



Exhibition
See original paintings and spells at a FREE exhibition at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh until 2nd September 2018

Free poster downloads
Dandelion, Otter and Kingfisher spell and illustration posters.



Campaigns & Crowdfunders Information to gift the book to schools and care homes across the UK

"What *The Lost Words* has helped to catalyze, in terms of a grass-roots movement of people working generously and passionately within their communities to re-wild early years and later education and creatively to close the gap between childhood and the natural world, has been amazing to watch and be part of. It's become something much bigger and more important than the book itself. But the book continues to be a catalyst and trigger for action and creativity and conversation and change, which for Jackie and me is a wonderful thing to see happening."
Robert Macfarlane

Use #TheLostWords on social media to share your own experiences.

Young people and nature is a hot topic in 2018. Are under 25s engaged or not bothered? Dis/connected? Is nature 'braw' or naw?

We've been collating research and feedback, information on initiatives, and stories to highlight the ways that young people can, and do, take practical action for nature. See what's going on through Year of Young People 2018, #iwill, Kick the Dust and more, through the John Muir Trust's [Young People & Nature](#) webpage.



ReRoute Nature Insight Briefing

- 74% of young people agree or strongly agree that they enjoy spending time in nature. 4% disagree or strongly disagree.
 - 76% of young people consider nature to be important.
- [ReRoute Young People and Nature Insight Briefing](#), a survey into young people's relationship with and understanding of nature, and their opinions of Scotland's natural spaces.



Kick the Dust London youth consultation

"Existing engagement with natural heritage is mainly for leisure and recreation. There is lack of knowledge and awareness, and misconceptions of what nature is. To many, nature is invisible. However young people feel positive about nature and are enthusiastic to discover and learn more."
"Weather was among the most common barriers identified."
"Social media is the key medium that young people use. They want to be inspired by their peers - creating videos, stories and campaigns and showing a diversity of people and activities."
'Keeping it Wild' London youth consultation as part of a Heritage Lottery Fund 'Kick the Dust' project

Dustkickers

#Dustkickers are a group of 17-24 year olds from across the UK who [helped HLF allocate £10.4million to young people's projects across the UK](#). They are helping to inform Heritage Lottery Fund thinking about young people and heritage, including communications and advocacy work.
"Kick the Dust seeks to generate real change within the heritage sector; to start the process of ensuring that working with young people is not seen as an optional extra but as business as usual within heritage organisations..." **Hannah Keddle**

Year of Young People

Year of Young People aims to inspire Scotland through its young people - celebrating their achievements and valuing their contribution. Visit www.johnmuirtrust.org/initiatives/youngpeople to see how you and your John Muir Award group can get involved:



#TheBrawOutdoorQuestion Take part in an online micro-survey

My Story 365 A year-long project shares the voices of young people in Scotland every day. Showcase your stories of wild places.

#2018Trees&Bees ReRoute is giving away 2018 free trees and packets of wildflower seeds to contribute to Scotland's biodiversity

500 Poems, 500 Places Jackie Kay, the Scottish Makar, has taken residency with Young Scot to encourage expression through poetry. Submit your poems inspired by the theme of 'place'

YoYP National Lottery Fund Apply for £3,000-£10,000 funding for heritage, community and sports projects that are run for and by young people aged 8 to 26.

JOHN MUIR TRUST & GLENRIDDING COMMON

Helvellyn Appeal

Flanked by the dramatic ridges of Striding Edge and Swirral Edge, the broad summit plateau of Helvellyn stands on the western boundary of Glenridding Common – 1,000 hectares of land in the heart of the Lake District that attracts huge numbers of walkers and climbers every year, drawn by its breathtaking scenery.

However, erosion, flooding and high footfall have all contributed to an urgent need to enhance the environmental quality of the land. The John Muir Trust has taken on the management of Glenridding Common for the next three years, with the aim of strengthening the wild character of the area and giving nature a greater chance to flourish. We are working closely with the Lake District National Park Authority, the local community, graziers and partners to carry out a sensitive land management programme that ensures both people and nature can thrive, including maintaining and restoring paths, and carrying out active conservation work.

With your support, we can take advantage of this incredible opportunity to enhance this unique area.

Find out more and donate at johnmuirtrust.org/helvellynappeal

